

GOVERNOR-ELECT TRANSITION DOCUMENT

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
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September 15, 2004

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

September 2004

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 Ron Ozment, Vice Chair
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➤ Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille,
Lincoln, Spokane, Whitman,
Walla Walla, Columbia, Asotin,
Garfield

➤ Okanogan, Chelan,
Douglas, Grant, Adams

➤ Kittitas, Yakima,
Benton, Franklin

➤ Whatcom, San Juan
Island, Skagit,
Snohomish, King

➤ Lewis, Wahkiakum,
Cowlitz, Skamania,
Clark, Klickitat

➤ Clallam, Grays Harbor,
Mason, Jefferson, Kitsap,
Thurston, Pierce, Pacific

➤ International Relations
➤ Interstate Relations
➤ Tribal Relations

➤ Fish Production
➤ Fish Science
➤ Fish Management

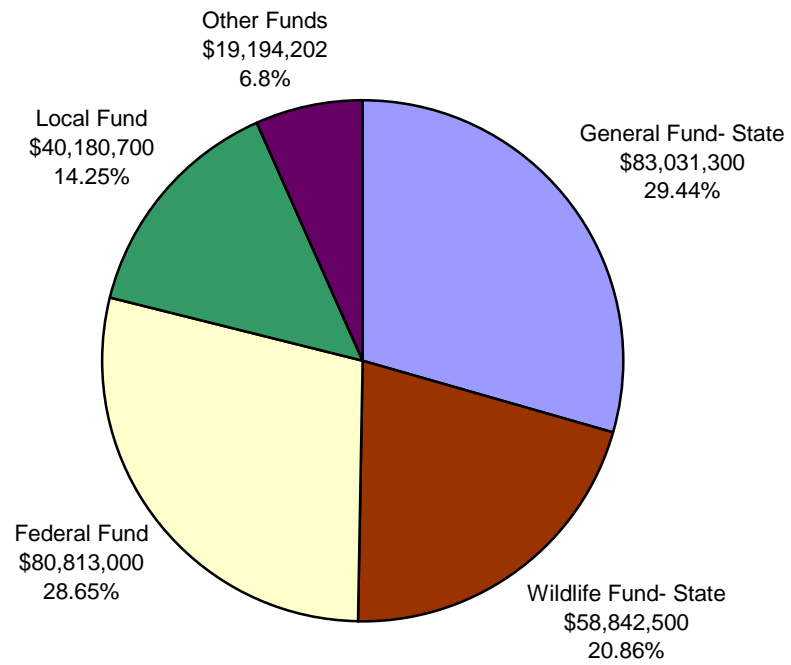
➤ Wildlife Appreciation
➤ Hunting
➤ Lands Management
➤ Wildlife Science

➤ Technical Assistance
➤ Habitat Restoration
➤ Major Projects
➤ Habitat Science

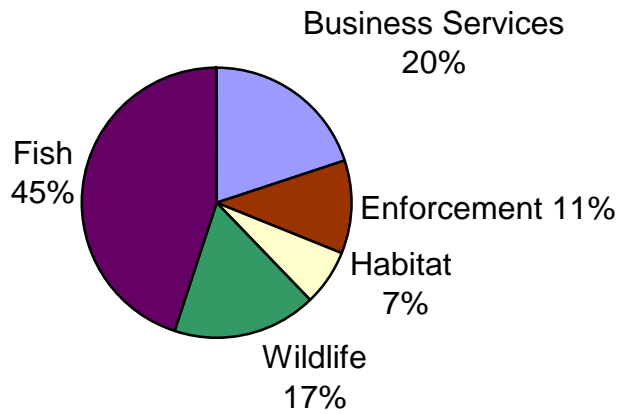
➤ Field Operations
➤ Special Investigations
➤ Hunter Education

➤ Budget, Fiscal, Contracts
➤ Capitol Prog. & Engineering
➤ Information Tech. Services
➤ Comm/Rec. Licenses

**Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
2003-2005 Biennium Budget
\$282,061,702**

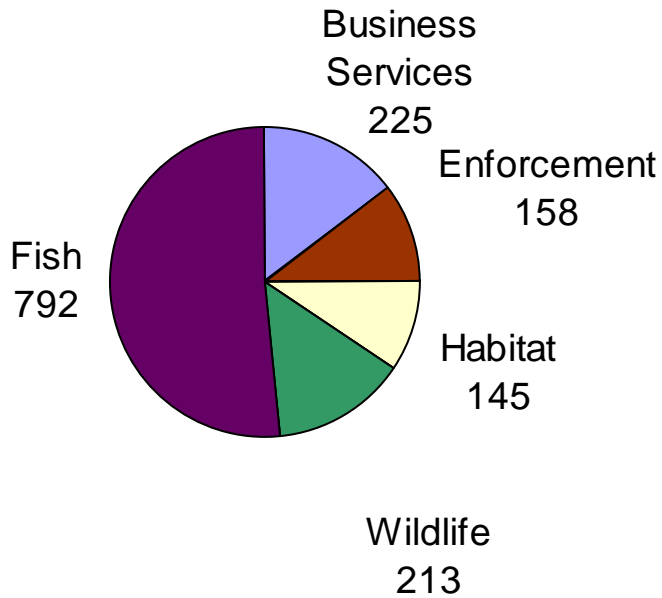


**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
2003-05 Biennium
Total Funds by Program**



Business Services	Enforcement	Habitat	Wildlife	Fish	Total
\$56,441,333 20.01%	\$31,235,112 11.07%	\$18,662,937 6.62%	\$48,737,324 17.28%	\$126,984,996 45.02%	\$282,061,702

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
2003-05 Biennium
Total FTEs by Program**



Business Services		Enforcement		Habitat		Wildlife		Fish		Total
225		158		145		213		792		1,533

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for the management of the state's fish and wildlife resources. The Department's Strategic Plan outlines its mission, statutory mandate, values, goals, objectives, activities, and performance measures. The plan is linked to and supports the Governor's Priorities of Government (POG) initiative.

The activities listed below are captured in the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) Activity Inventory. The Activity Inventory is used in both the POG process and the development of the Governor's 2005-07 Operating and Capital Budgets.

OFM Activity Inventory for the Department of Fish and Wildlife:

- **Administration** – includes management and support activities at both the Department and Program levels (i.e., customer service, budget, accounting, contracts, personnel, training, safety, program management and administration, etc.).
- **Fish and Wildlife Laboratory Activities** – includes biological, pathological, scale, and genetic analysis.
- **Fish and Wildlife Production Activities** – includes state-run fish hatcheries and game farms.
- **Habitat Management and Enhancement** – includes waterfowl habitat projects, planting and reseeding, and fish barrier removal.
- **Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Research** – includes scientific studies and analysis designed to help understand the ecological needs of fish and wildlife species and their habitats.
- **Conduct Surveys of Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat** – includes the collection of field data to determine the relative health of species populations and their environments, and the monitoring of species populations.
- **Coordinate Tribal Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Policy and Management** – information and work are shared resulting in co-management of certain fish and wildlife species.
- **Develop and Maintain Agency Information Systems** – provides access to accurate fiscal, accounting, and licensing information for Commissioners, Department managers, and others.

- **Fish and Wildlife Non-Hunting and Fishing Rules** – protects and conserves fish and wildlife and their habitats through the development of rules pertaining to commercial and recreational licensing, grazing, the use of WDFW-owned or -managed lands and listing of state endangered or threatened fish and wildlife.
- **Habitat Conservation and Species Management and Recovery Plans** – develops and implements plans to protect populations of unhealthy species by using multi-species habitat-based approaches.
- **Compliance of Fish and Wildlife Regulations** – ensures compliance with fish, wildlife and habitat rules and regulations by active enforcement, investigation, prosecution, and education.
- **Department Compliance with ESA and Other Government Regulations** – ensures compliance with a focus on the Endangered Species Act, State Environmental Policy Act, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, ESA Take Permits, and implementation of Hatchery Genetic Management Plans.
- **Manage Department of Fish and Wildlife Lands for Non-Resource Purposes** – includes such endeavors as fire and weed control on Department lands and other activities not related to hunting and fishing such as rock climbing and road rallies.
- **Manage Fishing and Hunting Seasons** – includes Commission and Department actions to develop and adopt policies related to recreational hunting and fishing and commercial fishing seasons (includes the public process for rule setting followed by the Commission).
- **Manage Landowner Access Agreements** – maximizes recreational opportunities on Department-owned and managed lands, as well as private lands through landowner agreements.
- **Manage Populations of Species of Concern** – includes the artificial propagation, captive breeding, or translocation of threatened or endangered species to conserve and protect those individual species.
- **Manage Problem Wildlife** – install fencing to contain wildlife species on state land; investigate and pay claims for agricultural crop damage by deer and elk; respond to wildlife nuisance complaints and threats to public safety.
- **Manage Recreational Access Sites for Public Use** – provides access to fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing on Department-managed access sites.

- **Produce Scientific Reports and Publications** – participates on technical panels and publishes study results for internal and external scientific journals.
- **Protect Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat** – reviews hydraulic permit applications designed to protect fish life; inventories fish protection needs involving placement of screens to keep fish from entering irrigation waterways (including habitat acquisition and securing conservation easements).
- **Protect Human, Fish and Wildlife Health** – in conjunction with the state Department of Health, ensures fish, shellfish and wildlife are safe for human consumption.
- **Provide External Customer Service** – ensures good communications with the public and media; provides responses to public inquiries and public disclosure requests.
- **Provide Internet Access to Agency Information and Data** – provides public access to Department information and data through the Internet. Maintain the Internet and intranet websites and other web-based capabilities.
- **Provide Outreach and Education Services** – provides educational opportunities that increases understanding of the environment and fish and wildlife; work with youngsters, schools, volunteers, and others to protect and enhance fish and wildlife populations and teach fishing and hunting.
- **Provide Technical and Policy Assistance** – provides technical and policy expertise to private citizens, local, state, and federal governmental agencies and other countries concerning impacts on fish and wildlife resulting from projects and decisions of others.

MAJOR ISSUES

State Wildlife Account

A strategy for the State Wildlife Account spending must be developed that includes either a recreational hunting and fishing license fee increase, or a reduction in account spending. During the 2003-05 Biennium, the Department spent more State Wildlife Account funds than incoming revenues can sustain. The Account had a large fund balance at the beginning of the biennium. However, legislative decisions to shift State General Fund spending to the Wildlife Account, coupled with increases in operation costs, depleted the fund to the point where its June 2005 balance will be insufficient to allow spending at current rates. Hence, the Department will need to seek legislative support for recreational license fee increases. If support is lacking, a spending reduction plan will have to be developed prior to the start of the 2005-07 Biennium.

The Governor and the 2005 Legislature will have to decide whether to increase these license fees. However, if fees are not increased, the Department will be required to make spending adjustments for the 2005-07 Biennial fiscal period. While some recreational license holders will likely be opposed to a fee increase, others will support one providing it is spent on core Department activities. There will be little or no support among recreational license buyers for both a license fee increase and a continued shift of State General Fund costs to the State Wildlife Account.

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Implementing Salmon Recovery

Salmon recovery is moving into a critical phase and will require significant Department resources. Regional salmon recovery plans are being drafted statewide and are currently scheduled to be completed in June 2005. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) deems this planning effort as critical to the recovery of salmon and has embraced the use of these plans in fulfilling the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). To achieve recovery, full implantation of the regional plans is essential. Implementation will require Department coordination and support of a wide array of local efforts.

The Lead Entity Program has been a successful framework for achieving on-the-ground results in salmon recovery projects. For their continued success, Lead Entities will need continued assistance in developing project lists that carry out action priorities from the regional recovery plans. Successful implementation will also require continued cooperation between Lead Entities, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups, and other local efforts to ensure that the actions of these groups are complementary at the local

scale and collectively will be effective in meeting the highest priority actions identified in the regional plans.

As implementation continues, measuring the success of our efforts will be the next hurdle to face, both in terms of Department effort expended and funding required. Measuring success will be critical in determining whether or not we are meeting biological recovery goals identified in the regional recovery plans. Monitoring at the stream reach and watershed scales has already commenced. Regional assessment of status and trends is still in a scoping and design phase, but sampling will be initiated during the 05-07 Biennium.

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Hatchery Reform

The Department's effort to reform state hatcheries must continue to ensure hatcheries become an integral part of the watersheds where they are located and serve two roles: support wild fish recovery and conservation goals; and provide hatchery fish for sustainable fisheries and direct economic benefits to Washington's communities.

In 2004, an independent group of scientists, the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG), delivered its recommendations for Puget Sound and coastal area hatcheries. In the wake of these recommendations, policy discussions with co-managers, legislators, and others must continue; program specific actions need to be defined; and fiscal support must be secured to implement agreed-upon infrastructure and operational improvements.

More specifically, work must continue on revising Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs). These plans are expected to include reforms recommended by the HSRG. The plans also are expected to reduce the potential for litigation under Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements. For example, Lower Columbia River coho are currently being considered for listing under the ESA. Artificial propagation of coho on the Lower Columbia is part of the revised HGMP now being developed and could assist in preventing the species from being listed.

All HGMPs for the Lower Columbia River Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) are due to the National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in fall, 2004, while remaining HGMPs are due by June 2005.

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Lands Management

The Department must continue work on development of a comprehensive lands policy that determines criteria for the acquisition and disposal of lands; determines the changes in land management practices necessary to comply with conservation needs of listed species; and identifies potential funding sources for adequate operations and maintenance of all Department-owned lands.

In recent years, the Department has been very successful obtaining state and federal funds to purchase land and conservation easements. This success has created the need for increased appropriation authority from the legislature, as well as the processing of unanticipated receipts. However, the ongoing debate over government ownership of property intensifies when such spending requests are made, with some legislators and local elected officials asserting state ownership of land removes property from development and results in lost tax revenues.

Moreover, as Washington State's population has increased and development has escalated, access to traditional hunting and fishing areas has decreased. Providing and maintaining access to fish and wildlife opportunities is a growing challenge requiring creative approaches.

A clear land acquisition policy is needed to guide state natural resource agencies, in particular when it comes to competing for federal and state funds for acquisition or conservation easements. To accomplish this task, the Department in 2004 created an internal task force to inventory and review Department lands and land management practices and develop policy recommendations. Once completed, the new policy is expected to provide strong guidance for the Department's Lands Management Division.

The task force, along with other Department staff, is also investigating ways to bolster access to hunting and fishing areas without increasing Department land ownership. One such approach under review would place a surcharge on hunting license sales. The new funds would be allocated back to private landowners who allow hunter access, and used to cover potential costs such as road maintenance, vandalism, clean up, fire danger, and liability insurance.

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Problem Wildlife

Existing Department initiatives must continue – and new ones developed – to deal with public safety concerns and private property loss caused by dangerous and problem wildlife. Encounters between dangerous wildlife and citizens, and private property loss

due to deer, elk and other wildlife damage, continue to be significant statewide issues, requiring an increasing share of Department resources, the development of public-private partnerships, and new outreach and education initiatives.

Department records indicate confirmed dangerous wildlife incidents have decreased the past two years over previous years. Nevertheless, certain areas of the state continue to be exposed to significant public safety issues. For example, public safety concerns in five northeast Washington counties prompted the passage of legislation in 2004 aimed at decreasing the cougar population in those counties. The Department recently reached agreement with county officials on how to implement the legislation in late 2004 and early 2005.

At the same time, deer and elk damage to agricultural and horticultural crops continues to be problematic, and damage claims against the state continue to mount. The Department must find ways to mitigate and reduce these losses consistent with sound resource management. For example, the Department is proposing a pilot program in the Yakima area where wildlife damage to private property has been consistently high. The pilot includes creation and funding of a Problem Wildlife Advisory Group. The pilot program uses existing stakeholders and partners who have been working on elk damage issues. The Department will provide guidelines and criteria, but the local Problem Wildlife Advisory Group, in consultation with Department staff, will resolve their own damage issues. The Department is proposing the initiative be funded in this coming biennium's operating budget.

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